

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 6-10, 16 and 17 are pending. By this Amendment, the Specification and claims 1 and 16 are amended.

Reconsideration based on the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. The Drawings Satisfy All Formal Requirements

The Office Action objects to the drawings based on informalities. In particular, the Office Action indicates that FIG. 1 should be labeled "PRIOR ART". Applicant notes that the amended drawings submitted with Applicant's November 14, 2008 Amendment included labeling of FIG. 1 as "PRIOR ART". Regarding the consistency of the Figures with the description, the specification is amended so that Figures 1, 2 and 4 are appropriately described as exploded cross-sectional views.

Withdrawal of the objections to the drawings is respectfully requested.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 6-10, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) over Trokhan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,547,747). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Trokhan does not disclose or even suggest an absorbent article including, *inter alia*, a core interposed between a cover layer and a barrier layer, wherein a superabsorbent polymer is applied to the core in a pattern, and concentration of the superabsorbent polymer varies through the thickness of the core, with the highest concentration of the superabsorbent polymer being at a portion of the core closest to the barrier layer, as recited in claim 1, and as similarly recited in claim 16. As explained in

the present application, this configuration is effective in preventing gel blocking in the area of the core that is in initial contact with the body fluid.

The Trokhan '747 patent discloses a method of forming an absorbent structure including forming regions of topographically different elevations on a capillary substrate, and then applying an absorbent onto elevated regions of the substrate so that patterns of absorbent are formed on the substrate. See col. 2, lines 38-64 of the Trokhan '747 Patent. However, Trokhan does not disclose or suggest applying a higher concentration of absorbent closer to a barrier layer to avoid gel blocking.

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 16 are in condition for allowance. The dependent claims are also in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed as well as for the additional features they recite.

Prompt and favorable consideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Director is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 01-1785.

Respectfully submitted,

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